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Roy, Basanta Koomar

The labor revolt in India

New York

1920

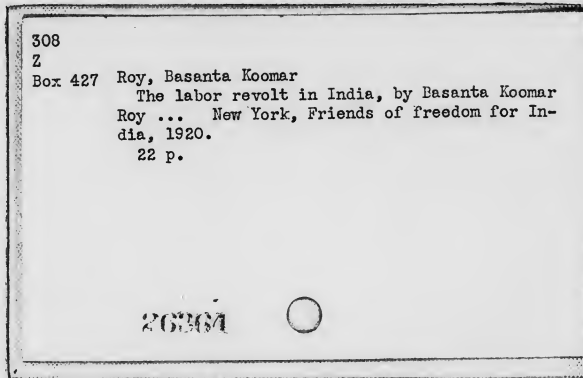
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# THE LABOR REVOLT IN INDIA

By

**BASANTA KOOMAR ROY**

*Author of "Rabindranath Tagore: The Man  
and His Poetry"*

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Box 427

New York

**FRIENDS OF FREEDOM FOR INDIA**

Seven East Fifteenth Street

1920

*Ten Cents*



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## THE LABOR REVOLT IN INDIA

Borne, as it were, on the back of a tornado has gone forth throughout the world the momentous message of a tremendous labor unrest in India—an unrest that is spreading like prairie fire from trade to trade, from city to city, and from province to province. The workingman of India, like his comrades of other lands, has long been suffering in silence from the insatiable greed of his master. Today the entire world seems to be aflame with the fire of labor unrest that seeks to burn to ashes all social iniquities, economic debaucheries and political hooliganism that have plunged humanity into the very abysmal depth of unalloyed misery. And India is only playing her part in this great drama of Humanity.

India is as large as the whole of Europe without Russia. Within her boundaries fifteen British Isles or ten Japans or all of the United States east of the Rockies may comfortably be accommodated. Her population is 315,000,000, three times that of America, in other words, she has one-fifth of the total population of the world. In natural resources, she produces one-third of the world's supply of rice and cattle, tea and tobacco; one third of its cane sugar; one fifth of its cotton; and one-tenth of its wheat. The mineral products of India include gold, coal, petroleum, lead, tungsten, mica, tin, jadestone, ruby, sapphires, iron, silver, copper, alum, manganese, clay, chromite, agate, gypsum, diamond, platinum, antimony, graphite, asbestos, bismuth, etc., etc. In the year 1917, India produced coal worth \$22,558,225; gold worth \$11,109,445; petroleum worth \$5,464,825; manganese worth \$7,505,400. Experts estimate that not even a thousandth part of the iron deposits of India have been worked or even prospected. India's coal fields are vast, rich and almost inexhaustible.

### Occupations of Population

Of the total population of 315,000,000—143,456 men and 62,614 women live principally on their unearned incomes. This leisure class with their dependents number 540,175, i. e. 0.17 per cent. of the total population of the country. According to the last census, 227,080,092 are supported by occupations connected with the production of raw materials of which actual workers are 106,508,881—male 72,332,823, female 34,176,058; the total supported by pasture and agriculture are 224,695,900 of which actual workers are 105,335,379—male 71,462,858, female 33,872,511; the total supported by fishing and hunting are 1,854,583 of which actual workers are 865,054—male 659,400, female 205,653; the total supported by the raising of farm stock are 5,176,104 of which actual workers are 3,590,691—male 2,984,467, female 606,224; extraction of minerals supports 529,609 of which actual workers are 308,449—male 2,685,256, female 1,764,193; wood industries support 3,799,892 of which actual workers are 17,515,230—male 11,503,467, female 6,011,763; the total supported by textile industries are 8,306,501 of which actual workers are 4,449,449—male

2,685,256 female 1,764,193; wood industries support 3,799,892 of which actual workers are 1,730,920—male 1,297,527, female 433,393; metal industries support 1,861,445 of which actual workers are 737,306—male 657,938, female 79,369; ceramics supports 2,240,210 of which actual workers are 1,159,168—male 767,886, female 391,282; food industries support 3,711,675 of which 2,134,045 are actual workers—male 806,194, female 1,327,851; clothing and toilet industries support 7,750,609 of which actual workers are 3,747,755—male 2,676,445, female 1,071,310; building industries support 2,062,493 of which 962,115 are actual workers—male 752,342, female 209,773. Transportation supports 5,028,978 of which 2,394,882 are actual workers—male 2,156,943, female 237,939; transport by water supports 982,766 of which actual workers are 481,605—male 451,404, female 30,021; transport by road supports 2,781,938 of which actual workers are 1,362,504—male 1,181,167, female 181,337; transport by rail supports 1,062,493 of which 474,184 are actual workers—male 448,992, female 25,192; post office, telegraph and telephone services support 201,781 of which 76,589 are actual workers—male 75,380, female 1,209. Public administration and liberal arts support 10,912,123 of which 4,499,654 are actual workers—male 3,981,507, female 518,147. All trades such as banking and brokerage, trading in textiles, metals, wood, skins, etc. support 17,839,102 of which 8,101,406 are actual workers—male 5,464,141, female 2,637,265. In view of the fact that India has the overpowering weight of population, that she occupies a strategic position on the trade routes of the world, that she produces tremendous amounts of raw materials, and that she is the determining factor in the preservation or destruction of British imperialism which is the wet nurse of the present capitalistic system of the world, it cannot be denied that India is destined to play a prominent part in the Great Adjustment that has begun after the great betrayal at Versailles.

### Industrial Revolution

From time immemorial India has been famous for the riches of her raw materials and the matchless excellence of her manufactured products. India's silk and muslin, brocades and calicoes, ivory goods and metal works were wont to be exported all over the world. Thus India grew fabulously rich. This aroused the cupidity of foreign nations. At last India came under British political domination; and soon by unjust laws most tyrannically administered India's industries were strangled to death. The duties on Indian goods exported to England were almost prohibitive. The duties on aloes ranged from 70 to 280 per cent.; on assafoetida from 233 to 622 per cent.; tea from 6 to 100 per cent.; coffee from 105 to 373 per cent.; sugar from 94 to 393 per cent.; calicoes and dimities 81 per cent.; manufactured cotton 81 per cent.; manufactured goods of hair or goats wool 84 per cent.; lacquered ware 84 per cent. Many articles of Indian manufacture were unconditionally prohibited; while British goods were forced on the people by diplomatic pressure or at the point of the bayonet. The following figures would paint but a faint picture of the actual state of affairs: In 1814 1,266,608 pieces of India's cotton goods were imported into Great Britain, but in 1835 the number came down to 306,086 pieces. On the contrary, in 1814 India imported from Great Britain 818,208 yards of cotton goods, but in 1835 51,777,277 yards. In 1787 Dacca exported \$1,500,000 worth

of muslin to England; but it came down to nothing in 1817. Thus it was in other industries. No wonder that the East India Company paid dividends of about 120 per cent. Millions of India's artisans were forced into farming. The country where agriculture and industries worked harmoniously for the enrichment of both was reduced to a purely agricultural country to produce food for the millions of Great Britain, and raw materials for the mills and factories of the same country.

But with the beginning of the new nationalist movement in India since 1905 this land of erstwhile cottage industries of uncommon efficiency is now in the midst of a titanic industrial revolution. Modern mills and factories are ceaselessly cropping up on all sides. In British India alone in 1917-18 there were 236 cotton mills; 1,428 cotton ginning, cleaning and pressing mills and factories; 514 rice mills; 76 jute mills; 125 jute presses; 5 woolen mills; 14 government arms and ammunition factories; 61 iron and brass factories; 7 petroleum refineries; 176 tile and brick factories; 87 railway workshops; 36 sugar factories; 86 engineering workshops; 125 saw mills. In these industrial centres one sees sights of revolting contrasts. In one section of the city British captains of industry live in their ravishingly luxurious homes where even dogs and cats are well fed and well kept; and in another section one enters a factory to see a great craftsman who once produced articles of exquisite beauty that may still be decorating mansions and museums in New York and Paris, in Rome and London, now working for a few cents a day, mechanically feeding a machine; or one sees young women whom malnutrition has made old much beyond their age, incapable of even nursing their own babies, working in hungry stomachs for eleven hours a day in ill-ventilated rooms; and again one finds dear little children of nine and ten who should be in schools studying are here working, starved and emaciated, the lustre of their black eyes and the pathos of their faces speaking loudly of their imminent doom. It is in these mills and factories with their outrageously long working hours, scandalously low wages, and degrading slums and tenements where nothing but starvation and death prosper, that the spirit of labor revolt is mostly in evidence in its aggressive form; for here the translucent pool of the divinity of human life is being cruelly vitiated with the deadly poison of modern materialism and criminal capitalism. So let us first consider the problem of the industrial workers.

### Working Hours

In 1908 a British government commission made an inquiry into the condition of labor in the Indian factories. This British commission was forced to admit that in the textile factories excessive hours were frequently worked in cotton mills; in all jute mills weavers were employed for excessive hours. The commission also discovered that many mills were run and the workers had to work from 5:30 A. M. to 7:30 P. M. with only half an hour's recess; the Calcutta jute mills were open from 4:30 A. M. to 8:30 P. M. The cotton ginning mills were run up to eighteen hours a day. The factories of Broach and Ahmedabad were working 14 hours; those in Agra for 15¼ hours, and those in Delhi for 14½ hours a day. The rice and flour mills were worked as high as twenty-two hours a day. As a result of this report, the British government ordained that no man should be employed in the textile factory for more than twelve hours

in any one day. A woman's working day should consist of eleven hours, and children between nine and fourteen should not work for more than six hours. And the day the boy completes his fourteenth year, he is made to work twelve hours a day. The workers actually have only twelve minutes to eat their lunch. In Bombay and Madras many working men live in the suburbs. And social service experts have observed that in more instances than one, workers have to leave home at 4:30 A. M. to be on time at the factory gate at 5:45; and they plod back to their homes at 8 in the evening. The government regulates only the working hours in the mills and factories. Workers in other fields are exploited all the more. In some of the gold, coal, iron, mica, and manganese mines, the workers are forced to work even for as high as twenty-two hours a day. In such cases meals are brought to the workmen at work. In the tea gardens of Assam women up to eighteen years are supposed to work for nine hours a day, and men for twelve hours. But every day they are made to work for much longer hours; and almost invariably they are subjected to unspeakable tortures and outrages.

### Wages

Though the workingman of India works from dawn to dusk, and quite often until late hours at night, he is most poorly paid. India's enemies claim that the standard of living is so low in India that they do not need high wages. The standard of living of the workingman of India is low not by choice, but by necessity—the necessity of poverty. The rich men of India have at least just as high standard of living as the rich men of America and Europe. At any rate, the British Factory Commission of 1908 did not think it worthwhile to consider the problem of wages of factory workers. The abject poverty in which the industrial workingman is forced to live may easily be imagined from the wages prevailing in the cotton mills in Bombay, the jute mills of Bengal and the leather factories of Cawnpore. In the cotton mills the weaver gets per month \$15.64; warper \$13.50; rover \$8.02; drawer \$7.79; reeler \$5.65; doffer \$4.20; these miserable wages include war bonus. In the jute mills of Bengal that are completely owned by Scotchmen from Dundee, the wages per month are: carpenter \$10.00; weaver \$9.00; beamer \$7.33; winder \$6.00; spinner \$4.91; unskilled laborer \$4.40; rover \$4.00; shifter \$3.66; carder \$3.00. In 1917 and 1918 export of raw materials and manufactured jute was worth \$164,356, 975. In the leather works of Cawnpore, a machine operator gets \$7.16 a month; slicker whiteners \$5.33; unhairer and flesher \$4.00 and scourer and setter \$4.00. Thus the mill hands starve while the mill-owners draw dividends as high as 200 per cent. on their investment. On his return to London from India in 1918, Hon. E. S. Montagu, the present secretary of state for India said "The wages paid in India are so low that even small rise in the prices of food or cotton may give rise to serious disturbances." During the war, wages have increased by about 50 per cent., whereas the prices of staple articles of food and clothing have increased as high as 150 per cent.

In order to crush all spirit of independence and revolt against abhorrent British atrocities in the mills and factories of India, some manufacturers are giving a "gratuity fund." The worker after ten years of continuous and satisfactory service is offered between five and ten per cent. of his total wages. This

temptation has been cleverly devised to keep the workingman a silent slave to his employer. Similarly, the charity-mongers are busy using palliatives like workingman's clubs and institutes, this they do either professionally, or to buy a few dollars' worth of heaven, or to hypnotize the workers into complacent slumber. The awakened workingman of India knows full well that charity is an anachronism in the modern age. Charity can exist only in a society where injustice thrives, and what light is to darkness, justice is to charity. So the new workingman of India clearly sees through such snares and is refusing to be deceived by them.

### Housing and Health

Starvation wages and growing indebtedness of the industrial worker of India are bound to reflect on his housing and health. An authority on Indian labor problems thus describes the housing condition in the mill districts of Bombay: "The houses are built on the ground without a plinth and in wet weather are never dry. When the ordinary storm water becomes mingled with sewage either from the cesspools or from the drainage pipes themselves, the conditions of the houses can hardly be imagined by those who have not seen them. It has been stated that the death-rate in one-roomed tenements is 65 per thousand, figures which are more eloquent than any words to describe the evils arising from bad housing." The tenement rooms are generally eight feet by ten, and in such hovels live millions of Indian workers. Indeed, such is the lot of the workingman of India, that even the prisoners of that country are better fed, better clothed and better housed than him who produces all the fabulous wealth on which fatten his rulers and exploiters. The average weight of prisoners in Bombay is 112.12 lbs., whereas that of the mill operative excepting weaver is 102.093 lbs. The weaver is better paid than others and his average weight is 104.810 lbs. The average weight of the prisoner in the United Provinces is 115.08 lbs., and that in Burma is 120 lbs. In the factories themselves, "any man," to use the words of an expert, "would feel exhausted even if he merely sat in a chair in some of the workrooms for eight or nine hours, the atmosphere is so foul." And doctors agree, that, "The mill operative suffers to a very large extent from tuberculosis and dyspepsia."

### Unions

The workingman of India is proverbially patient, but there is a limit even to his patience. His growing impatience with his hard lot has crystallized into unrest, and this unrest is manifesting itself in constant formation of unions and execution of strikes. Heretofore trade guilds and caste systems used to protect the workingman. Now, on account of the growing pressure of poverty he is being forced to change his trade. So trade guilds are disintegrating. And on account of the rapid growth of the revolutionary movement the caste system is fast becoming a thing of the past. A new social order is taking the place of the old. And in this period of reconstruction the Indian workingman realizes the need of industrial organizations. Unions are making the workingman of India realize his own strength. The workingman, be he in India or America, England or Japan, is like the elephant we see in India, tremendous in size and titanic in strength, and yet a little man sits on his neck and with a little steel rod, guides and controls the huge elephant as he pleases. Why? Because the

elephant's eyes are small, very small, and it has not intelligence enough to know that it has tremendous strength. It is exactly the same thing with the workingman; he does not realize his own power. Even though he is in the majority, he is controlled, ruled, and quite often even tyrannized by a handful of people, a microscopic minority. Now, suddenly he has discovered himself, and realized his own kingly importance on the chessboard of human society.

Unions in India are being formed not along craft, but along industrial lines. India's labor leaders are quite conversant with the deficiencies of the craft unionism of the West. So they are forming and operating unions along industrial lines. Subdivisions there must be for the sake of efficiency. But subdivisions are being made to co-operate and co-ordinate for the benefit of human society as one, even as different organs of the body co-operate and co-ordinate to keep the human body alive. At any rate, unions in India are rapidly growing in number and influence. To name a few of such unions that have recently been formed in India: Textile Workers Union of Bombay, Bombay Millhands Union, Postmen's unions in the larger cities, dockmen's unions, Bombay United Labor League, Bombay Baroda and Central Railway Employee's Union, teachers' unions, barbers' unions, Madras Labor Union, trolleyman's unions in different cities, Madras Rickshawmen's Union, railway workshop unions, workmen's unions at Jamsedpur, Calcutta United Association of Masons, Telegraph Operator's Unions, the North Western Railway Association, etc. etc.

### Strikes

As unions increase, strikes do increase. Strike is now a thing of daily occurrence in India. At the least displeasure the workmen go on strike, and paralyze gigantic industries. Every trade and every industry is affected by it. Since last January, that is to say, in the first six months of the year 1920, there have been at least 200 strikes involving more than 1,500,000 men, women and children wage earners. In the first two months of the year, there were 110 strikes in the cotton and jute mills alone. Long hours, low wages, capitalistic caprices, governmental lawlessness, and above all, the glowing tales of the triumph of the Russian proletariat are enhancing the cause of the strike movement. The nature of the wrongs and the remedies sought by the strikers may generally be summarized in the demands of the strikers of the Tata Iron and Steel works at Jamsedpur: Eight hour day; fifty per cent. increase in wages; production bonus which is now granted to Europeans only; leave with full pay in all cases of sickness and disability through accident in the works; prompt payment of adequate annuities to the family of persons killed by accident in the works; codification of laws of dismissal from services; one month's vacation a year with full pay; all over time duties should be discouraged or made strictly voluntary.

Not only the steel workers, the textile weavers and the railwaymen but also the sweepers and scavengers, barbers and tailors, yes, even the British slaves in the tea gardens of Assam are in revolt against the present system, and are going on strike and are triumphantly winning their victories. To mention just a few strikes in India since the beginning of the year: In the general strike in Bombay, 200,000 were out. It began in the cotton mills and soon extended to longshoremen, clerks, workers in municipal offices and the employees of the

petroleum company. Woolen mills at Cawnpore and Bombay 20,000 out; Railway workshop workers at Jamalpur, 20,000 out; workers in the jute mills of Calcutta 35,000 out; Masons, bricklayers and unskilled workers in the building industries in Calcutta, 20,000 out; Rangoon Mills 22,000 out; Madras trolley workers, 2,000 out; Pioneer Press of Allahabad, 700 out; Madras Cotton Mill workers, 5,000 out; Karachi port workers, 6,000 out; Madras Cotton Mill workers, 17,000 out; Gun Carriage Factory workers at Jubbulpore, 3,500 out; Tata Iron Works at Jamsedpur, 40,000 out; Northwestern Railway, 25,000 out; Allahabad Postal and Railway Mail Service Workers; United Provinces government printing shop workers; the printing press of Civil and Military Gazette, Krishna and Edward mills of Beawar, the spinners of a group of mills at Ahmedabad; a second strike in Bombay and Madras Cotton mills; Bengal iron and steel workers; Eastern Chemical Company; Empire Engineering Co.; Angus Engineering Works; Cooper-Allen Tannery of Bombay; Printing Press of the Times of India, etc. The strikes in India are being conducted along industrial lines. Whenever there is a strike all connected with the industry—skilled and unskilled workers, chemists and clerks, foremen and porters, all walk out together, suffer together, starve together and when the victory is won, they return together. The women workers are taking keen interest in the labor movement, specially in the formation of unions and organization of strikes. Recently all the women workers in the Madras Mills struck work first, then 4,000 of their men comrades followed suit. Quite unlike in America and Europe the women workers of India can never be hired as "scabs" to take the places of men strikers. Women have all through ages been the guiding influence in India. And in these industrial movements too, their spirit of self-sacrifice and attachment to lofty idealism are leading the workers of India to the haven of assured victory.

The tyrannical attitude of the British government in suppressing strikes in India may be told by the story of the Calcutta postmen's strike. The Calcutta postal peons respectfully represented to the British government that their families were starving on \$5.00 per month salary, and that unless they were given \$6.66 a month they would go on strike. The British officials did not think it worthwhile even to consider such a proposition. The postmen went on strike "with the result that one man got twenty days' imprisonment with hard labor for being the treasurer of the strike fund, five others were condemned to three weeks' imprisonment with hard labor for being the leaders, eight others were fined, some dismissed and the rest pardoned and kept on the old salary of \$5.00 a month," when the cost of living increased by 150 per cent. Imprisonments and dismissals are the mildest forms of punishment used by the British in India. They have grown so panic-stricken, that wherever there is a strike, there they send their soldiers with rifles and machine guns to shoot down men, women and children in order to terrorize the workers into submission. Just the other day, British soldiers massacred in cold blood more than 200 striking steel workers at Jamsedpur. The workers, however, are assuming a militant attitude, and are emphatically refusing to submit to British atrocities without a protest. The enraged workmen of India are quite often destroying plants and railroad trains, and are doing other damages to the properties of their masters.

### In British Colonies

By the sweat of his brow, the blood of his veins and the marrow of his bones the Indian workingman has helped the Briton to build and develop his world-wide empire. And yet, in all the British colonies he is most mercilessly exploited. The British capitalists must have money no matter what it costs others in sorrow and suffering; in moral, material and physical degradation. They own the government of India, and it is they who had indentured labor legalized, and by cowardly methods most despicable they induced thousands of India's illiterate workmen and workwomen to sign, rather finger-mark, contracts of their own slavery. Thus they were shifted out of India to work in the mines of South Africa, in the farms of Fiji, in the plantations of British Guiana and Mauritius. Today there are more than 2,000,000 Indian workers in the British colonies. In the Mauritius there are 257,697; in Federated Malaya States 210,000; in Natal 133,031; in British Guiana 129,389; in Trinidad 117,100; in Fiji 44,220; in Surinam 26,919; in Jamaica 20,000; in the Transvaal 10,048; in the Cape Colony 6,606; in Canada 2,500. In all the British Colonies the condition of the Indian workers is anything but enviable. In many respects they are treated worse than dogs, cats and cattle. In South Africa their condition is the worst. The treatment they are subjected to may best be described in the words of an English woman, Isabel F. Mayo, who thus writes in the pages of the *Millgate Monthly*: "Fierce dogs have been set on these indentured laborers. They have been cooped up in boxes for many hours without food. Among the charges against the father, mother and sons of an employing family were those of striking an Indian across the face with a rhinoceros hide whip, lashing a woman with same till blood flowed from her ear, and applying the same whip on her son when he cried out at the sight of his mother's sufferings, and tormenting a maimed Indian who wanted to leave the estate, but who could get no proper information as to how to do so and who got sentenced to fourteen days' hard labor in his efforts to get justice, in consequence of which he tried to commit suicide; forcing his wife to the field when her infant was not a week old. On all occasions these employers get off with small fines." Indians at home and abroad most valiantly protested against these and other disadvantages and atrocities. Mahatma Mohanlal Karamchand Gandhi was for many years the recognized leader of the Indians in South Africa. He was imprisoned times without number for his resistance to unjust laws and outrageous practices. Many a time he has been made to "march publicly through the streets in prison garb to grace General Smuts' triumph." And his compatriots have been sent out in road gangs under notoriously brutal warders, "armed with rhinoceros hide whips, who were free to maltreat the prisoners under their charge." Indian women in South Africa "have given birth to still born children as the result of harsh treatment or shock at their husbands' sudden imprisonment."

The recent revolt of the Indian workers in Fiji has brought to the attention of the world a state of affairs that demands immediate attention and satisfactory solution. Male Indian workers there get only thirty-cents a day and female seventeen cents. Thus exploited and starved, both men and women are most unspeakably tortured and outraged. Unable to bear any longer, the workers struck work and revolted. Numerous policemen were hurt during the

riots and 200 Indians were arrested. The reason for labor unrest in Fiji is not far to seek. It lies, as elsewhere, in the capitalistic system that thrives in Fiji. The Colonial Sugar Refining Co. has its headquarters in Sydney and owns large sugar estates in Fiji, with many of Sydney's wealthiest men as shareholders. In January 1916 its reserves and undistributed profits amounted to \$3,150,000; in May 1918 they amounted to \$5,655,000. In two years the Vacuum Oil Co. made a profit of \$4,905,000 on a capital of \$7,500,000. In Canada, Australia and New Zealand Indian workers are not even allowed to enter; though colonists from these countries may hold highest positions in the civil and military services of India. On account of recruiting necessities the indentured system was officially abolished in 1917, but the misery the degradation, the tortures and the crushing poverty of the Indian workers in the British colonies still continue, even in a more reprehensible form. Since 1917 Indian workers are barred from America. There are however, about 3,000 Indian workers in this country, mostly along the Pacific Coast. They work on the farms and in the factories. They are well-paid so their standard of living is at least just as high as any group of American workmen. Industrious, thrifty and peaceful they are indeed an asset to America. They are intensely patriotic. Most of them belong to the Hindustan Gadar Party, a party that is working for the complete independence of India, and have rendered invaluable services to the cause. Dozens of its members have most cruelly been killed by the British for the crime of patriotism.

### Agricultural Labor

By far the most important and most perplexing of India's labor problems is the rural situation. The great majority of the people of India live in villages. There are only thirty cities with over 100,000 population, and they harbor but two per cent. of the total population of the country. There are 730,000 villages with the average population of 363 people. About 75 per cent. of India's population are dependent on farming; and the total population of 315,000,000, 230,176,104 are supported by agriculture including raising of farm stock. The main products of the soil include, rice, wheat, barley, jawar, bajra, maize, grani, pulse of various kinds, sugar, tea, coffee, oilseeds, cotton, jute, indigo, opium, tobacco, etc., etc. The following table shows the total acreage under chief crops and the production in 1917-18:

NAME OF CROPS	ACRES SOWN	YIELD
Rice -----	80,141,000 -----	36,236,000 Tons
Wheat -----	35,487,000 -----	9,922,000 "
Cotton -----	25,298,000 -----	4,085,000 Bales
Linseed -----	3,102,000 -----	398,000 Tons
Rape & Must'd -----	7,126,000 -----	1,153,200 "
Seasamum -----	4,279,000 -----	381,000 "
Ground Nut --	1,936,000 -----	1,057,000 "
Jute -----	2,736,000 -----	8,864,600 Bales
Indigo -----	710,710,200 -----	126,800 In cwt. of dye
Sugar Cane ---	2,809,000 -----	3,311,000 Tons
Tea -----	667,100 -----	371,296,300 Lbs.



The people of India have a large share in the production of raw materials but the least reward. Before the establishment of the blighting British autocracy in this land of plenty and prosperity, the farmer was the master of his own farm and he lived in village communities that have aptly been called "self-governing little republics." His only obligation to the central government was the payment of about one-twelfth of the crops harvested. In case of failure of crops, he was totally exempted from all payments. He always paid in kind. But under the British rule, the entire system of land tenure and village life has undergone a radical change. Today the British government is the paramount landlord in India. It owns every acre of land. In all provinces, excepting Bengal, where the permanent settlement inaugurated by Lord Cornwallis of American fame still exists, the farmer leases the land from the government for ten, twenty or thirty years. And at every new settlement the land tax is raised fifty, sixty, and even as high as one hundred and five per cent. The farmer has now to pay in cash. Crop or no crop he must pay, and that on a fixed day. According to the present system "fifty per cent.," to use the words of Lord Morley, "of the net assets is the ordinary standard of assessment of land revenue alone throughout India." This rate generally rises to as high as 65 and 70 per cent. In addition to this the farmer has to pay rates and cesses for police, roads, irrigation, public works, etc. The Indian farmer is the most heavily taxed man in the world. "The government assessment" wrote Sir William Hunter in 1883, and things are certainly much worse now, "does not leave enough food to the cultivator to support himself and his family throughout the year." Writes General Briggs in his Land Tax in India: "The flourishing condition of the country under the Moghul Emperors is recorded by all European travellers who have visited the East within the last three centuries and the wealth, the population, and the national prosperity of India far surpassing what they had seen in Europe, filled them with astonishment. That the condition of the people and the country under our government presents no such spectacle, is every day proclaimed by ourselves, and we may therefore assume it to be true. If I have proved that we have departed from the practice of our predecessors, that we have established a system far exceeding theirs in rigour even in the worst of their regular governments, then indeed there is some reason to call for a reform, and to hope at least for investigation. I conscientiously believe that under no government, Hindu or Mohamedan professing to be actuated by law, was any system so subversive of the prosperity of the people at large as that which has marked our administration. A land tax like that which now exists in India, professing to absorb the whole of the landlord's rent was never known under any government in Europe or Asia." "Every effort was made," reads a Bombay government confidential report, "lawful and unlawful, to get the utmost out of the wretched peasantry who were subjected to tortures in some instances cruel and revolting beyond description if they could not or would not yield what was demanded. Numbers abandoned their homes and fled into neighboring Native States; large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation, and in some districts no more than one third of the cultured area remained in occupation."

And again, thus wrote Hon. Mr. A. Rogers, an ex-member of the Bombay Council to the under-secretary of state for India: "In the eleven years from 1880

to 1890 there were sold by auction for the collection of land revenue the occupancy rights of 1,963,364 acres of land held by 840,713 defaulters in addition to personal property to the value of 2,965,081 rupees (about \$1,000,000) of the 1,963,364 acres 1,174,143 had to be bought in on the part of the government for want of bidders, that is to say, very nearly 60 per cent. of the land supposed to be fairly and equitably assessed could not find purchasers and only the balance of 779,142 acres was sold." The British government sells not only the farms but also the homes and personal belongings of the farmers and their families—their ploughs, their cattle, their beds, their cooking utensils, their houses and their dishes, yes everything they have but the rags in which they are dressed.

### Famines

Thrown out of their farms and homes the farmers and their families face starvation and death. This naturally points to the pathetic story of India's chronic famines that simply sweep away the lives of millions of India's poverty-stricken human beings, as cyclones sweep particles of dust, and dry leaves. Famines in India are increasing in frequency and intensity. Not a year passes that some part of India or other is not under the iron grip of this deadly scourge, England's gift to India. In his "Prosperous British India," Sir William Digby publishes statistics showing how famines in India have increased under British rule: In the fourteenth century, there were three famines; in the fifteenth, two famines; in the sixteenth, three famines; in the seventeenth, three famines; in the eighteenth century to 1745 four famines. But under the British rule, in the eighteenth century from 1769 to 1800 seven famines; nineteenth century, thirty-one famines. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century there were five famines with 1,000,000 deaths, and in the fourth quarter, eighteen famines with 26,000,000 deaths. Many ignorant people all over the world are gulled into believing by British propaganda that India is over-populated, hence people must die of starvation. But what are the facts in the case? The density of population per square mile in Belgium is 652; in England and Wales 618; in Holland 535; Japan 320; Germany 310.4; Italy 293; Austria 247; China 266; and India 175. Nor is birth rate in India the highest in the world. The birth rate per thousand in China is 50; Russia 49; Servia 41; Hungary 40; Rumania 40; Bulgaria 39; Germany 36; Mexico 35; Chile 35; and India 35.

Famines in India are neither caused by failure of rains as many think, for India has the heaviest rainfall in the world. In some provinces of India it rains more in one day than it does in England throughout the year. The trouble lies in the fact that the British government does not store the rain water, nor does it build enough irrigation works though it extorts from the poor peasants eight to twenty-two per cent. dividend on investments in such enterprises. The annual revenue derived from irrigation works amounts to \$27,500,000. Nor are the famines due to lack of food stuffs, as even an economist like Professor Richard T. Ely seems to think. "In India," he writes in his "Outlines of Economics," "the population presses so closely upon the food supply that any considerable failure in the rice crop is sure to result in famine and starvation." In spite of many agricultural difficulties India is one of the greatest food-producing countries in the world, as has been mentioned before. Even in the worst famine years India produces more food than what she can consume herself. In such years when India's own children die of starvation in millions, she is

forced to export food to England. In 1899-1900 India suffered from one of the worst famines in history, and yet British India exported \$60,332,445 worth of grains alone. In 1917-18 the export of India's food and drink was worth \$247,179,360. This was a famine year in India. It is estimated that during this year and the next about 32,000,000 men, women and children were slaughtered by England's sword of famine. And yet, Sir J. Meston, the finance minister to the government of India, spoke thus in his budget speech on March 1, 1919: "Export of cereals rose by over 50 per cent. to a total in 1917-18 of 5,400,000 tons valued at \$180,000,000. In the case of wheat the record figure of 1,500,000 tons was reached. In the earlier months of the current year, India's contribution of food stuffs was maintained at an even higher level than in 1917." Moreover, India's agriculture is in such an antiquated state that with the very beginning of scientific methods the yield of the land can be doubled. At present, India produces only ten bushels of wheat per acre to Great Britain's thirty-four.

### The Revolt of the Farmer

With the tremendous strength of desperation the over-exploited farmer of India, too, is in revolt against British autocracy. As long ago as 1877 there were serious agrarian riots in Bombay as a protest against over-taxation. Properties were destroyed and British officials were roughly handled. In 1907 there were serious rioting in the Punjab canal colonies. Lord Morley claimed that they were purely seditious. Yes, it was an agrarian sedition. The canal zone could be made into a source of great blessing to the people. But the irrigation works were so cruelly taxed by the government as to extort from the farmers dividends as high as 22 per cent. The land revenue was high; and the British officials were so tyrannical that even the *Pioneer* of Allahabad, a semi-official paper, remarked at that time that "the poker backed Prussian official was mild in comparison with the canal bureaucrats." Feelings of fierce resentment spread fast, mass meetings were held and wild words were uttered. The colonists were principally members of the mighty Sikh Brotherhood. Through them the agitation was carried into the British army. Riots occurred in different cities of the Punjab. Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, saw the danger ahead and intervened in the matter. The colonization bill was rejected by the Lieutenant governor. Again in 1917 crops in Kaira, Bombay, was 25 per cent. below the normal. The tax on land was 50, 60, 70 and even as high as ninety per cent. of the rental. The farmers were forced to pay in cash. This year the farmers refused to pay any taxes. Mohanlal Karamchand Gandhi, the leader of the passive resistance movement in India, himself investigated into the condition to find that in more than fifty per cent. of the cases the tax could not be met at all. He urged the farmers not to pay any taxes. The government officials forcibly collected all they could. Later the British Indian Government published a report. But the only Indian on the Committee, Sir Sankaran Nair, who later resigned from the Viceroy's council as a protest against the British atrocities in the Punjab, thus wrote in his minute of dissent: "The note on the Kaira Case only shows that the Government officials did not give any relief to the raiyats and were precluded from giving any by the revenue rules. It admits that no inquiry is allowed into individual circumstances with the result that even if there is no crop on the land the raiyat would be bound to pay the revenue. If the raiyat does not pay, he will have to surrender his land without any compensation

for the capital and labor sunk. . . . This is the system responsible for the destitution of the raiyat." The Indian revolutionists are incessantly preaching the gospel of independence amongst the agricultural workers. As a result the farmers in all the provinces are defying the authority of the British Raj at the least provocation. Even the slave workers in the tea gardens of Assam have in more instances than one thrashed their British taskmasters to their hearts' content.

### Art Workers

Students of international art and literature know of India's contribution to aesthetics. Under the Indian rulers, before the British occupation, art and literature were patronized by the government. The Indian princes do it today; but things are different in British India. The Briton does not know any of the languages of the country; nor does he appreciate the subtle message of India's art. Neither pen nor poesy can adequately describe such a pathetic situation. The art galleries are filled with cheap works of art from the west. In the place of artistic public buildings of old, crude structures are being erected today. Sculpture has almost become a thing of the past. Music is pining and drama has degenerated. Thus for lack of appreciation and encouragement, nay, on account of even positive discouragement from the alien British usurper in India, art workers have been forced to leave their cherished pursuits in life and go into business only to make a living. This loss to the world of art is incalculable. But with the new awakening of the people the art workers are uniting and forming themselves into guilds and unions again. And they have already begun to produce some exquisite works of art and literature. It is a happy thing that an artist like Abanindranath Tagore is leading the art movement, as Rabindranath Tagore is leading the literary movement.

### Abject Poverty

Work, work, work; hunger, hunger, hunger; lingering death, lingering death, lingering death; these alas! are the milestones on the tragic path of the life of the workingman of India. Enveloped in an engrossing mist of poverty he goes through life as in nightmare. From birth to death, he rises before dawn hungry, works all day long with but little to eat, and at night he goes to bed hungry again. His constant companions are hunger and thirst, debt and degradation, sorrow, suffering and sickness, unclean clothes and unsanitary homes. His only consolation in life is the hope of relief in death. In his historic speech in the U. S. Senate on the Failure of British Rule in India, Senator Joseph Irwin France said that the national annual income per capita in U. S. A. is \$372; in Great Britain \$232; in France \$182; in Germany \$156, but in India it is only \$9.50 and from this miserable sum \$1.60 is taken by the government as taxation. Sir William Digby in his "Prosperous British India," however, holds that the average income of the Indian people is about \$5.00 and he also holds that the average income per capita a day was .04 in 1850; .03 cents in 1880; and it came down to a cent and a half in 1900. The national wealth per capita of U. S. A. is \$2,154; in Great Britain \$1,913; in Germany \$1,512; in France \$1,238; in Austria \$1,121; in Italy \$555; and in India \$70. Out of the vast population of India only 240,000 are assessed to an annual income tax of \$333 and over; and only \$40,000 of these have incomes of \$1,666. Even salt is a luxury with the workingman of India, for the government taxation on it is

1000 per cent. In other words, for a cent's worth of salt the people have to pay a tax of ten cents. Salt is a government monopoly; and though India is surrounded on three sides by deep salt water seas, it is a crime, punishable by imprisonment, for an Indian to take a bucketful of this water and extract the salt out of it. For lack of the proper amount of salt in the system, people die of malaria, and cattle of moran. It is estimated that 200,000,000 (double the population of America) of India's workers cannot have even one full meal a day. Take for instance, the family budget of a typical workingman's family in Bengal recently published in *The Prabasi of Calcutta*: The family consists of three brothers, one unmarried, consequently two wives, one sister, one mother and three children. The eldest brother works at different things in different seasons. The second brother works in the family of a landlord. The youngest stays home, ploughs the farm and takes care of the cattle. The other two brothers occasionally help him. The income of the family is:

The eldest brother's four months' work as a boatman.....	\$35.00
For two months' work in the rice fields.....	14.00
Six months as a day laborer.....	25.00
The yearly salary of the second brother.....	30.00
For Board.....	24.00
For clothes.....	2.50
Annual net income from three bighas of land.....	25.00
From sale of milk, eggs, vegetables, etc.....	15.00
The women earn by husking rice for the landlord.....	10.00
Total.....	\$180.50

Expenditure	
Food (one meal a day).....	\$149.00
Clothes.....	20.00
Tobacco.....	3.00
Interest on money borrowed.....	6.00
Total.....	\$178.00

Any comment is unnecessary. Economists agree that a poor family spends a large percentage of its income on food, and the percentage increases in proportion as the family becomes poorer. In America a family with an annual income of \$600 spends 43.84 per cent of its income on food; while a family with an income of \$1,200 spends 28.63 per cent. for the same purpose. The richer a family grows the more it spends on education, health, recreation and amusement. Judging by these analogies what a ghastly story the following table prepared by Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee tells of the conditions in India:

	Day Laborer	Agriculturist	Carpenter	Blacksmith	Shopkeeper	Middle-class
Food .....	95.4	94.0	83.5	79.0	77.7	74.0
Clothing .....	4.0	3.0	12.0	11.0	9.0	4.7
Medicine .....	0.0	1.0	1.5	5.0	5.9	8.0
Education .....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.3
Religion and Social Ceremonies .....	0.6	2.0	2.0	4.0	5.0	8.0
Luxuries .....	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	2.0
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In spite of such grinding poverty of the people, England wantonly squanders most of their revenues on militaristic enterprises and capitalistic vagaries. Out of the total revenue of \$617,000,000 the British government in India derives \$113,432,000 from land revenue; \$17,764,000 from forests; \$15,281,000 from opium; \$60,766,550 from liquor; \$19,571,500 from salt; \$28,584,000 from posts and telegraphs; \$66,762,000 from customs, etc., etc. On the other hand, the government expenditure for military purposes is \$213,911,500; strategic railroads \$72,344,500; education \$1,838,338 and agriculture \$484,500, etc., etc. The cost of the administration in which Indians are legally barred from holding high positions is the highest in the world. The Americans are the richest people on earth, and the Indians the poorest; and yet what a revolting story the following figures tell: The salary of the President of the United States is \$75,000 a year and that of the Viceroy of India \$83,000 plus various allowances and forced presents of jewels, ivory furniture and other precious things from the princes of India. A Cabinet member of U. S. A. gets \$12,000 a year, but a member of the Viceroy's council gets \$27,000. The most highly paid governor in U. S. A. gets \$12,000, whereas the British governors of India get \$40,000 each plus various allowances. The Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court receives \$15,000 a year, but the British Chief Justice of the High Court of Bengal receives \$24,000. Contrast with these fat salaries the wages of the industrial and agricultural workers of India! The British fix their own salaries, and they certainly do know how to help themselves.

England not only squanders India's money in India to keep her in subjection, but has the brazen impudence of spending India's public revenue for England's wars of imperialistic expansion and commercial aggrandisement in other parts of the world as well. As for instance, India was forced to pay, as the children of the soil had no voice in the matter, the cost, the full cost, of England's first Afghan war of 1838-39; the first China War of 1839-40; the Persian War of 1856; the Abyssinian War of 1866-68; the Perak Expedition of 1875; the second Afghan War of 1878-80; the Egyptian War of 1878-80; the Sudan War of 1885-86. And during the last five years of the ferocious Anglo-German War in which others took part, England mercilessly extorted from the helpless and forcibly disarmed people of India, \$2,000,000,000 in cash beside other costly "gifts" at the point of the baton and the bayonet. Every year England drains out of India no less than \$200,000,000 without an equivalent return. There would be famine even in America if she were exploited as India is by England. "Let no one cite India" wrote William Jennings Bryan after a visit to that country, "as an argument in defense of colonialism. While the Briton has boasted of bringing peace to the living he has led millions to the peace of the grave; while he has dwelt upon order established between warring troops, he has impoverished the country by legalized pillage. Pillage is a strong word, but no refinement of language can purge the present system of its iniquity."

### Mortality

Such ruthless exploitation can not but result in abnormal mortality in the land. By modern sanitary methods America has turned a plague spot like Panama into a veritable health resort. By economic and sanitary advancement, England has reduced her death-rate in the last fifteen years from twenty-five to fourteen per thousand, whereas India's death-rate is ever on the increase.

In 1893 it was 25 per thousand, in 1903 35, and in 1918 it went up to 62.42 per thousand. The death-rate in France is 17 per thousand, Norway 13; Sweden 14; and Holland 12. The average longevity in India is only 23.5 years. The death-rate of children under one year per thousand births is exceedingly high in India. In England it is 98; Denmark 94; Switzerland 94; France 78; Sweden 72; New Zealand 51; but in India it is 325. In 1918, 11,134,441 people died of fever, and fever in India has been aptly called "an euphemism for insufficient food, scanty clothing and unfit dwelling." It is estimated that two-thirds of the total mortality of India are due to malnutrition and starvation. Not only graves but also prisons are being filled with the victims of poverty. A recent survey of prisons in Bengal discloses the ratio of total prisoners to those that are imprisoned for breaking laws for self-preservation from starvation; In 1916 the total prisoners were 28,834 of which starvation prisoners were 4,069; in 1917 the figures respectively were 29,772 to 4,211; and in 1918, 28,698 to 4,052.

### The Co-operative Movement

Though the co-operative credit movement is but fifteen years old, its growth has been phenomenal. In every province it is growing in number and influence. Rack-rented, indebted and poverty stricken, the farmers of India find a little relief in this movement. The revolt of the raiyat was growing so powerful and threatening that the British government readily took to the safety-valve of the co-operative movement. How the movement is spreading may be easily surmised from the following statistics: In the Bombay Presidency in 1907 there were seventy such societies with the capital of \$50,000; in 1909 209 societies with the capital of \$242,000; in 1916 992 societies with the capital of \$3,235,000; and in 1919 there were 2,083 societies with the capital of \$6,700,000. In the Madras Presidency in 1905-6 there were only twenty-seven societies with 2,733 members and \$35,883, in capital; in 1914-15 there were 1,446 societies 90,088 members and \$2,151,862 in capital. In this year the Punjab had 3,267 societies with 154,065 members and \$4,557,577 in capital. In 1914-15 there were all over India 16,295 co-operative societies with 761,935 members with a share capital of \$4,372,495. Deposits from members amounted to \$3,833,160. During this year loans were issued to 2,613,994 members and other societies. In 1905-6 the first year of this movement there were only 283 societies; 28,629 members; share capital \$43,735 and deposits of \$41,310; and 22,670 members and other societies received loans.

The co-operative movement is entirely under the control of the British government. It makes the laws and operates the machinery of administration. Through this the alien government is becoming conversant with the minutest details of the life of the farmer's family. Consequently this beneficent institution is fast becoming an engine of tyranny. It is nothing short of an expansion and deepening of the British imperialistic conquest of India. And indeed, here is being enacted the final act in the attempted enslavement of the people which began with the military occupation one hundred and fifty years ago. With the dawning of this consciousness many co-operative societies quite independent of the government, are being founded all over India. Hundreds of co-operative shops, companies and purchasing and distributing agencies are being established. At Conjeevaram the Co-operative Productive Society has been founded for the bene-

fit of the weavers. It supplies capital, looms and raw material; it buys and sells the products and divides its profits amongst its members. Institutions like this are numerous now. The country is in the grip of this movement and herein lies the economic salvation of many countries beside India.

### Education

The progress of the labor movement in India is somewhat hampered in its constructive aspect by the general lack of education in the country. The British government is opposed to the expansion of education in India. It seeks to keep the people in illiteracy, so that they may be ruled easily. Education opens the eyes of the people and makes rebels against conquerors, as education opens the eyes of the wage slaves and makes rebels against capitalists. But education is not a new thing in India. At the very dawn of human history, when England was peopled with savages, India had schools, colleges and universities. Well-informed historians do not hesitate to admit the debt of human civilization to India's contribution towards the very birth of sciences like arithmetic, algebra, geometry, astronomy, grammar, chemistry, physics, medicine and surgery; and arts like poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture and music. It has been admitted by British administrators that before the British occupied India, she had schools in every village, and the boon of education was free to the people. But today, according to British Blue Books, there are no schools in four villages out of five. In the second decade of the twentieth century there are no free schools or compulsory system of education for the children of the land. In fact eighty children out of one hundred are growing without any schooling at all. The percentage of population enrolled in the elementary schools of the United States is 19.87; in England and Wales 16.52; Germany 16.30; France 13.90; Japan 13.07; and in India it is only 2.38. It is indeed a bitter irony of fate that India should be dependent for the progress of education on the whims of the British administrators. A few years ago Gopal Krishna Gokhale introduced a bill in the Viceroy's legislative council for the introduction of free primary schools for India's children, but the British government that is arduously engaged in the tremendous task of "civilizing the heathen Hindus" rejected the bill outright. And it was claimed by the British officials that the Indians were not fit even for free education.

After one hundred and fifty years of British rule, only ten men out of a hundred and one woman out of one hundred and fifty can read and write. In other words about 95 per cent. of the people are illiterate. In forty years Japan has reduced her illiteracy to only five per cent. In the last twenty years America has reduced the illiteracy in the Philippines to fifty-six per cent. In the last forty years America has reduced the illiteracy of the Negroes to thirty per cent. India is primarily an agricultural country. And yet there is not one agricultural school for the farmers of India. The first Agricultural College in India was opened a few years ago, and that at the generosity of an American citizen: Mr. Henry Phipps gave \$150,000 to the British government for this purpose. And the rules are such that farmers are most effectively barred from deriving any advantage from this college, though the money was primarily meant for them by its generous donor. India's industries are in a backward state, and yet there are no worthy industrial schools in British India. The education of the children of the industrial workers in the mill districts is most

woefully neglected. England's educational policy in India may best be surmised from the following figures giving the per capita annual expenditure on education of the countries mentioned: U. S. A. \$4.00; Switzerland \$3.40; England and Wales \$2.50; Germany \$1.70; Japan \$0.27; India \$0.02. It may be mentioned here that the Gaekwar of Baroda spends \$0.14; the Maharaja of Travancore \$0.15; and the Maharaja of Mysore \$0.25, almost as much as in Japan.

The workmen have already begun to realize their position on the ladder of education. So in mammoth mass meetings both the agricultural and industrial workers are demanding the immediate opening of industrial, technical and agricultural schools for the people. It remains to be seen how long the alien government would dare refuse the united demand of the workmen of India. In the meantime labor leaders with the self-sacrificing co-operation of the workers of India are dotting the country with night schools for the education of the workers and their children. In many instances workers in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras have most cheerfully suffered from starvation in order to contribute their might for the opening up of schools. In the remotest villages rich women are selling their jewels and working women are giving their services to raise funds for the same purpose. Numerous young men have given up their lucrative positions in order to be able to teach the workers in such schools. In spite of the government opposition to the contrary, the educational movement in India is progressing with incredible rapidity.

#### Politics and Labor

It cannot be truthfully denied that the labor revolt is a part of the revolutionary movement in India which is daily growing more intensive and extensive. The leaders of the nationalist movement are fast realizing the importance of labor for the political emancipation of the country; and the importance of politics for the well being of human society. True it is that politics surrounds us on all sides. Education, sanitation, commerce and industry; food, shelter and transportation, may even, birth, marriage and death are most vitally affected and controlled by politics, either for good, or for evil. The Indian leader now finds that when the British government frowns he cannot open schools for the education of the masses. And if it is against the interests of the alien rulers, it is extremely difficult to do anything for the economic development of the country, or improve the lot of the workmen and workingwomen. And again, when he finds that in the making of the laws that raise taxes, disburse finance and generally shape the destiny of the country, it is the British overlords from beyond the seas, overlords that have been rightly characterized by Edmund Burke as "birds of passage and of prey," that wield the controlling power, he naturally cries out for a government in India that shall be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people; and not a government as it is today, of India, by the British and for the British. Hence the cry for "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" is rending the sky.

To this the British reply is repression, more repression, and coercion more cruelly administered. The province of Bengal was partitioned to weaken the growing solidarity of the people. The Universities Act was passed to cripple education. The Seditious Meetings Act was passed to throttle freedom of speech. The Press Act was passed to gag the press. The Rowlatt Act was passed to place

the country under martial law to crush all revolutionary activities in the country. A few of the provisions of this Act were: "Any Indian is subject to arrest without warrant upon mere suspicion, and detention without trial for an unlimited length of time. When tried, the accused is to be given a secret trial before a commission of three High Court Judges appointed by the executive. The accused is deprived of the help of a lawyer, and the prosecution shall not be bound to observe the rules of the law of evidence. The government may use any and every means in carrying out the law, and in obtaining confessions. Men who have served prison terms for political offenses may be required to give bonds for two years after their release; be restricted in certain specific areas; must report regularly to the police; cannot change address without notification of authorities and must give securities for good behavior. They can never thereafter write or discuss publicly any political subject, or distribute any writing or printed matter relating to any such subject. There shall be no appeal from the decision of this punitive court." The scope of the law of sedition was soon widened to include such crimes as

1. to say that the government has exposed itself to severest criticism at the bar of the public opinion;
2. to protest against the use of an Act which is in operation;
3. to say in connection with any measure of the government that its action is unjust and unwarrantable;
4. to sympathize with people who have been shot dead by the military forces of the government by calling them martyrs;
5. to attribute "blazing indiscretion" to the ruler of a province; and
6. to publish the report of an incident which gives new facts or contradicts in any way an official communiqué on the subject.

Protest meetings against the Rowlatt Bills were held in cities, towns and hamlets. They were attended by thousands of people. But nothing availed. As John Bull passed the Stamp Act in America and the coercion Acts in Ireland, so the same gentleman passed the Rowlatt Act in India. At last the leaders of the passive resistance movement, headed by Mahatma M. K. Gandhi, set aside the 6th of April, 1919, as the day of humiliation and prayer as a protest against this British inquisitorial law in the twentieth century. A general strike was organized for this day with signal success. The transportation systems of the principal cities of India were seriously affected. In the city of Bombay a few trolley conductors refused to stop work; so a few patriotic men killed themselves by simply plunging under the running cars. And soon the trolley system of the city came to a standstill. Shops and bazars, mills and factories, trains and steamships, posts and telegraphs all ceased operation. The entire country was like a living grave for the British, and full of transcendent exultation for the people. Millions of men and women all over the country went to temples and mosques and prayed for more strength of both body and mind to resist the infamous inroads of British despotism on the life and liberty of the people of Hindustan.

This was like the prelude to a great epic. For on the 10th of April the oppressed people of India rose in open rebellion against the British occupation of their country. And they rose in distant provinces. The cities of Delhi,

Lahore, Amritsar, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Virangam, Gujranwalla, Kasur and Calcutta were scenes of grave riots and revolutionary activities. The British authorities were simply staggered with the quickness of the revolutionary blow. A correspondent of the London Times admitted that the "outbreaks were nakedly revolutionary, unconnected with the Rowlatt Act or with passive resistance, which probably prepared a movement long concerted." In the course of these outbreaks, British banks, treasuries, town halls and government buildings were attacked and burned. Railway lines, stations and freight houses were destroyed at strategic points. Military depots and aeroplane sheds were attacked; fast express trains were stopped and looted. The workmen of India took the leading part in these activities. But alas! they had no arms, for India had been forcibly disarmed by the British. Given arms at that juncture India might have been absolutely free by this time.

The English Huns, however, attacked the people with rifles, machine guns and armored cars. Men, women and even children were shot down dead on the streets. Half of the city of Gujranwalla was burned to ashes by bombs from English aeroplanes, destroying hospitals, temples, mosques, churches and nurseries killing thousands in an undefended city. The climax was reached at Amritsar where in the Jalleanwalla Park General Dyer opened fire on a peaceful mass meeting without a word of warning and cold-bloodedly massacred 1,000 men, women and children in ten minutes; and about 2,000 were lying wounded weltering in their own blood for twenty-seven hours without food, or drink or any medical assistance. "I saw hundreds of persons killed on the spot," says Lala Girdhari Lal who witnessed the scene from the window of a house overlooking the park. "Firing was directed towards the gates through which the people were running out. Blood was pouring in profusion. Even those who lay flat on the ground were shot. No arrangements were made by the authorities to look after the dead or wounded. The dead bodies were of grown-up people and children."

As the Easter Massacre in Ireland has united the people of the Emerald Isle more than ever before. So this Amritsar Massacre has most wonderfully united the people, specially the Hindus and the Mahomedans. And this sense of unity has all the more been enhanced by the outrageous terms of the Turkish Treaty. Both the Hindus, and the Mahomedans (70,000,000 strong) have realized that gentle words and cringing petitions are useless in dealing with the British Bourbons. So they have started what is known as the non-co-operation movement. In other words, it is a movement for boycotting the British Government in India. The principal terms of non-co-operation include (1) the surrender of all titles of honor and honorary offices; (2) suspension of practice by lawyers, and settlement of disputes by private arbitration; (3) non-participation in government loans; (4) boycott of government schools by parents; (5) boycott of reformed councils; (6) refusal to accept any civil or military post in Mesopotamia and to refuse to offer as units for the army specially in Turkish territories now being administered in violation of pledges; (7) vigorous prosecution of the Swadeshi movement inducing people to be satisfied with India's own productions and manufactures; (8) resignation of all salaried government employees; (9) resignation of all police and soldiers from their respective positions; (10) absolute refusal to pay taxes to the British Government in any shape or form.

The first stages of this great movement of far-reaching consequences have already begun; and they began on the first of August last. The workmen responded to the call of the Motherland by a general strike embracing the entire country and every industry. The workmen of India have always and invariably been the first to suffer the most for a political cause. When about eight years ago Mahatma Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned by the British for his political activities, the workers of Bombay struck work, committed riots, broke windows and whipped the British as a protest against this great man's incarceration. Not very long ago, the British government prohibited a political mass meeting in Calcutta. And thousands upon thousands of workers struck work as a protest. Mills and factories were closed, work completely ceased in the docks and harbors, and not a wheel turned on the streets of Calcutta. The striking workmen proceeded to march on the streets, shouting Bandemataram (hail motherland), beating drums and singing patriotic songs. The British police opposed and insulted them. In retaliation the workers stoned the police and stabbed the English deputy Commissioner of Police, looted numerous English shops and wounded many English foremen of factories. The British soldiers soon arrived on the scene with rifles and cannons. The strikers were desperate, and they began to beat drums at the mouths of cannons defying the authority of the British Raj to rule over India. The British had to open fire in order to disperse the infuriated Indian patriots.

Neglected in education, maltreated in offices, ruinously exploited in the factories and on the farms, fruitlessly slaughtered on the fields of France, Flanders and Palestine, the patient workman of India has at last risen in revolt against his English master, and is perfecting plans to deal a deadly blow to the British rule in India, for he realizes that until the country is completely free from the yoke of the foreigner, he can never expect to be truly free. The question is often asked: "Is India fit for freedom?" In 1917 Mr. M. A. Jinnah, a prominent Indian, answered the question by saying: "From the Indian standpoint there can be but one answer—'Yes.' Our critics would probably challenge our conviction. Our only reply to them would be to go forward and put the matter to the proof. After all, what is the test of fitness? If we turn to history, we find that in the past, only such people have been fit for freedom who fought for it to attain it. We are living in different times and under different circumstances. Peace has its victories. We are fighting and can only fight, disarmed as we are, constitutional battles. This peaceful struggle is not and will not be wanting in the quality and vigor and sacrifice." If America and Argentine, France and Germany, China and Japan, Persia and Poland, Haiti, Liberia and England are fit for freedom, then India, too, is most decidedly fit for freedom. And the sooner she gets it the better it will be for universal peace, and the emancipation of the workmen of the world.

1917/18 10/1/20



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